

LISTENING MEETING GUIDELINES AND COMPONENTS

RAC and BLM sponsored public meetings

Guidelines

- A listening meeting can be held only by BLM, a RAC or both jointly. RACs may hold a special session or have a listening meeting within a regularly scheduled RAC meeting. The main purpose is to “listen” to verbal public input on the OHV program as well as provide and share information about the strategy and the other methods of written or electronic public involvement.
- At least one public “listening meeting” should be held in every western State, or logically combined as in the case of the Dakotas, Washington State and Eastern States. If only one listening meeting is to be held in a State, it should be BLM-sponsored, with RAC involvement in some way. If multiple listening meetings are proposed in a State, at least one should involve BLM-sponsorship in some way.
- The OHV mailer will be handed out before every public meeting so that the public has an opportunity to focus their solutions, ideas and comments on the primary topics at hand. A shipment of these will be sent to you in early June. Any recorded verbal comment or written comment received by BLM or a RAC at a listening meeting should be sent directly to the comment manager.

- RACs should be consulted about how they would like to be involved. A sample RAC invitation letter is attached to this IM . Those choosing to hold listening meetings (as part of their regularly scheduled meeting or a special session) can either submit the recorded public comment to the comment manager and/or pass a resolution based on that public comment to the comment manager. RACs that do not hold listening meetings or hold any public comment period regarding the OHV strategy are welcome to pass a resolution on the topics in the mailer or other topics, if they so choose, and submit it to the comment manager.
- The important factors in gathering public comment at any listening meeting, despite the style, format or meeting sponsor is that comment be **1-** oriented towards soliciting ideas and solutions (not issue identification) and **2-** collected and documented in such a way that the comment manager can easily analyze the comment. The mailer will be the basis for all public comment in order to assist BLM and the comment manager in analysis.

Components

- Public meetings held to solicit ideas and solutions during the development of BLM's National OHV Strategy should be tailored to meet your site-specific needs- whether held by a RAC or BLM.or jointly. Below are a list of the components of a listening meeting. You may choose all or one of the styles of input as outlined below. We have included some suggestions to help your meeting run more smoothly. The OHV team recommends that you have an open house at the beginning, followed by a presentation and then a formal public comment period, so that the public has an opportunity to attend all or part of the meeting. However, you may choose an open house or workshop style only or simply have a hearing style public comment meeting. A meeting Moderator needs to be selected and should be the State Director or management representative.

PRESENTATION- A 20-25 minute power point presentation has been produced by the Washington Office and National OHV Team and is included in your communication materials. A script is provided in the program for the person you select to narrate. We highly recommend that you use this presentation during your listening meeting to orient the audience to the issues and concerns. The presentation outlines the following:

1. OHV program national level - field problems and the need for solutions
2. OHV Program - how different States are addressing the issue
3. Covers the key issues areas (that the OHV mailer is based on)
4. Discusses methods of participation - written, electronic

OPEN HOUSE - May run up to one hour if other meeting components are used, longer if not.

This meeting style can be used alone, as a workshop, and/or with other components below. It is designed to familiarize participants with OHV issues while taking comments in a more informal setting. Verbal comments can be recorded or the public can be encouraged to fill out a mailer or respond electronically via the national web-site.

We suggest that you have a series of information “stations” that can be operated by employees or RAC members, which will help in providing information and soliciting comment. These individuals are the “listeners” in the open house format.

1. Comment station- Place for individuals to pick up or turn in completed OHV mailers.
Consider having computers set up with the website available for electronic submission of comment or display of how it works electronically.
2. Land use concerns station- base info on OHV mailer or use your local issues as illustrations as needed
3. Resource concerns station- same as previous
4. Legal considerations- same as previous
5. Registration and speaker sign station- Use if you intend to have a hearing style component to your meeting. Have cards for the public to fill out with name, city, State and topics they will address when they speak.

PANEL- You may wish to have a panel at your listening meeting. Use of a panel is suggested when you feel it is desirable for the audience to hear the spectrum of issues related to the use of motorized vehicles on public lands from their peers. Speakers could include OHV, environmental, county, tribal, State and other interests. The panel should represent a balance of interests. Panel speakers should be asked to answer the topics of their choice in the mailer or others they would like to address. Consider using:

1. RAC members as the panel
2. Interest group constituents nominate a representative (one of their peers) to serve on a balanced panel of different interests.

HEARING STYLE- This portion of the meeting should last two hours at the maximum, unless this is your sole meeting component. Speakers sign up at a registration table and place their card in a box. Speakers should be informed they have 3 minutes to address a topic they can select from the mailer, or other topic. They cannot yield their time to another speaker. Speakers will be called in the order their name is drawn from the box. A timer should signal when 30 seconds are remaining in the 3 minutes, and at the end of 3 minutes, time should be called. Elected officials and other dignitaries should be given priority for speaking order. A court reporter could be hired to record comments verbatim or BLM could record the comments. At a minimum, BLM “listeners” could be in the audience to take notes on the substantive comment of each speaker. The listeners or assigned BLM employee should consolidate the notes and submit them to the comment manager.

MEETING WRAP UP - 5 minutes

Person conducting or moderating the meeting, should thank everyone for the participation, outline again the time-frames and methods of accepting comments, and assure everyone comments will be analyzed. Mention anticipated guidance will be completed and available by November 30, 2000.